

## **CAREER OPPORTUNITY**

### **Town Manager**



### **Westford, MA**

The Town of Westford, Massachusetts, is seeking a new Town Manager. The Manager is appointed by a five-member, elected Board of Selectmen.

**Qualifications:** Especially fitted by education, training and experience in public or business administration to perform the duties of the office. Salary and benefit package competitive DOQ/E.

Applications accepted until position filled however, to receive full consideration submit applications by May 16, 2008 in confidence to:

**Thomas J. Groux**  
**Groux and Associates**  
**P.O. Box 374**  
**No. Chatham, MA 02650**  
**508-945-3160**  
**Email: [tgroux@comcast.net](mailto:tgroux@comcast.net)**

### **The Town of Westford**

The Town of Westford, population 21,300, is located 23 miles northwest of Boston, near the New Hampshire border. The Town was incorporated in 1729. Westford is a beautiful community with rolling hills, lakes and apple orchards. This still rural community is a fast growing bedroom community with a high tech emphasis.

Westford's recreation program offers extensive activities for all ages including two town beaches on spring-fed ponds. Nashoba Valley Ski Area is a main winter attraction. The J.V. Fletcher Library is "state of the art" serving all ages and interests of Westford's very active residents. The Library, established in 1797, is a progressive, responsible community resource and a leader in using new technology. It offers free wireless (WiFi) service throughout the Library.

The Westford Public School system has a student body of 5,120 students. Three elementary (K-2) schools; three elementary (3 –5) schools; two middle schools and Westford Academy (founded in 1794). Westford Academy was recently awarded a “silver” rating by U.S. News and World Report in its first listing of America’s Best High Schools.

The Town’s excellent Web site can be viewed at [www.westfordma.gov](http://www.westfordma.gov).

## **Town Government**

The Town of Westford adopted a Home Rule Charter in 1989. The Charter provides for an Open Town Meeting, Board of Selectmen, Town Manager form of government. The five members of the Board of Selectmen are elected for staggered terms of three years. Westford also has a large number of elected and appointed boards, commissions and committees. While the Board of Selectmen sets overall Town policy many other multiple member bodies also play a large role in developing policy. The Town’s professional staff provides ongoing staff support to these boards and commissions.

The Board of Selectmen appoints the Town Manager who is the chief administrative officer of the Town and is responsible for the day to day administration of town government.

The Town’s Fiscal Year 2008 budget, for both town and school costs, is \$83.9M. Capital projects and other appropriations bring the FY 08 spending to \$89.9M. Of this amount \$52.3M or 58.2% is dependent on the property tax and \$19.6M or 21.8% comes from State. The remaining \$17.9M or 20% comes from local receipts and other available funds. The Westford School Department’s direct operating budget is \$41.9M. State aid to education in 2008 totals \$14.1M.

Westford’s Bond ratings are very good with Moody’s giving a “Aa3” rating and S & P giving Westford a “AA” rating. Both issued in January 2008.

## **Responsibilities of the Town Manager**

The Town Manager, as chief administrative officer, is responsible for executing the policies established by the Board of Selectmen. The Manager appoints department heads and employees not otherwise appointed by elected officials, boards and commissions. The Manager also appoints the Board of Assessors, the Water Commission, the Recreation Commission, the Cemetery Commission and the Community Center Committee.

Subject to approval of the Board of Selectmen, the Town Manager may reorganize, consolidate, abolish, merge or divide, any Town department, office or commission, committee or function under the Manager’s jurisdiction.

The Town Manager prepares the annual operating budget and capital improvements program for all Town Departments and approves warrants for payment of Town funds.

The Manager is the Chief Procurement Officer and is responsible for purchasing (except for schools and library books) and approves the award of contracts for all departments, except the schools and library.

The Manager is responsible for establishing and administering personnel policies and fixing the compensation of employees appointed by him or her and also responsible for union negotiations, except school employees.

Sections 11 and 12 of the Town Charter list more specific and important responsibilities for the Manager.

### **Desired Experience, Education and Managerial Style**

The Board of Selectmen is seeking a person with strong leadership skills who understands the role of the Manager as it relates to the Board of Selectmen as well as the role of Manager as the leader of a management team. He or she must be able to delegate effectively and provide support and motivation to ensure continued high performance and creativity by all. The Manager must possess strong interpersonal skills and be able to communicate clearly and effectively in writing and in person.

The Manager must have solid experience in labor relations and negotiations. He or she must possess a high degree of personal integrity and project a positive profile in the community. A talent for conflict resolution will be an asset.

The Town Manager is expected to encourage and support positive school and town relations in order to maximize the limited financial resources of the Town.

The candidate must have solid budgeting and financial planning experience. He or she is expected to support employee development programs. A working knowledge of GIS systems and environmental statutes as well as familiarity with Massachusetts General Laws is desirable.

MPA or MBA preferred and at least five years experience as a town or city manager or a position with similarly complex responsibilities.

In summary, this is a position for a seasoned professional who can respond to both political and community pressure in a positive problem solving manner that encourages confidence in town government and support for the programs and goals of the community.

### **Issues for the next Town Manager**

The Manager needs to place a high priority on implementing the multiple policy directives and goals of the Board of Selectmen.

Westford faces the same fiscal constraints as other Massachusetts towns. Thus, an evaluation of Town operations and implementation of cost savings measures is just as important as the need to identify alternative financial resources.

Westford has a large number of citizen committees. The coordination of so many committees will be a challenge for both the Manager and staff. It is

important to evaluate this committee structure and, working with the Board of Selectmen, clarify the roles and responsibilities of these committees.

The Town Manager must be committed to the concept of strategic planning. Meaningful action on the current Master Plan study now in progress under the guidance of the Planning Board and Comprehensive Master Plan Committee is essential. This draft Plan can provide valuable guidance for Westford's future development, both economically and physically, but it can also offer important guidance concerning the governance of Town affairs.

The Town Manager should play a key role in coordinating the relationships between public and private organizations and insure the Town's interests are well served.

It is also important for Westford's Manager to encourage and support regional programs for the delivery of needed services that might otherwise be impractical for a single municipality to undertake on its own.